

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT PROPOSED AMENDMENTS  
TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY RULES  
490-4-.02, 490-4-.03, AND 490-9-.05 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

- 1) Rule 490-4-.02. Continuing Competence Requirements**
- 2) Rule 490-4-.03. Continuing Competency Audit**
- 3) Rule 490-9-.05. Dry Needling**

**TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:**

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the authority set forth below, the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy (hereinafter “Board”) proposes amendments to Board Rules 490-4-.02, 490-4-.03, and 490-9-.05 (hereinafter “proposed rule amendments”).

This notice, together with an exact copy of the proposed rule amendments and a synopsis of the proposed rule amendments, is being disseminated to all persons who have requested, in writing, that they be placed on a distribution list. A copy of this notice, an exact copy of the proposed rule amendment, and a synopsis of the proposed rule amendment may be reviewed during normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except official State holidays, at the Office of the Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217. These documents will also be available for review on the Board website <http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/licensing/plb/39>, or by contacting the Board office at 844-753-7825.

A public hearing is scheduled to begin at **9:30 a.m.** on **March 10, 2020**, in the Office of the Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217 to provide the public an opportunity to comment upon and provide input into the proposed rule amendment.

At the public hearing, anyone may present data, make a statement, comment, or offer a viewpoint or argument orally or in writing. Lengthy statements or statements of a considerable technical or economic nature, as well as previously recorded messages, must be submitted for the official record. Oral statements should be concise and will be limited to five (5) minutes per person. Written comments are welcomed. Such written comments must be legible and signed, should contain contact information from the maker (address, telephone number and/or facsimile number, etc.) and be actually received in the office prior to the close of business (5:00 p.m. EDT) on **March 3, 2020**. Written comments should be addressed to La Trenda Tyler-Jones, Director, Office of Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217; Fax (866) 888-7127.

The Board will consider the proposed rule amendments for adoption at its meeting scheduled to begin at **9:30 a.m. on March 10, 2020** at the Georgia Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217. According to the Department of Law, State of Georgia, the Board has the authority to adopt proposed rule amendments to Board Rules 490-4-.02, 490-4-.03, and 490-9-.05 pursuant to authority contained in O.C.G.A. §§ O.C.G.A.

§§ 43-1-19(a)(10); 43-1-24; 43-1-25; 43-33-10(4),(11); 43-33-14, 43-33-16 and 43-33-18(c)(1) & (3).

At its meetings on July 9, 2019 and November 5, 2019, the Board voted that the formulation and adoption of these rules do not impose excessive regulatory cost on any licensee; and any cost to comply with the proposed rules cannot be reduced by a less expensive alternative that fully accomplishes the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-33-10 and 43-33-12 through 43-33-19.

Additionally, at its meetings on July 9, 2019 and November 5, 2019, the Board voted that it is not legal or feasible to meet the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-33-10 and 43-33-12 through 43-33-19 to adopt or implement differing actions for businesses as listed in O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4(3)(A), (B), (C), and (D). The formulation and adoption of these rules will impact every licensee in the same manner and each licensee is independently licensed in the field of physical therapy.

For further information, contact the Board office at 844-753-7825.

This notice is given in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4.

This the 7<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2020.

La Trenda Tyler-Jones

La Trenda Tyler-Jones

Division Director

Professional Licensing Boards Division

Posted:

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF  
PHYSICAL THERAPY RULES CHAPTERS 490-4,  
CONTINUING COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS, RULE 490-4-.02.**

**Purpose/Main Features:** To clarify the continuing competence requirements and the responsibilities of the applicant, licensee and the Board as it relates to recording, reporting, maintaining and auditing of continuing competence documents. The amendment identifies CE Broker as the new online recording and reporting system used to track licensees continuing education hours. It simplifies subsection (10) in regards to the licensee's obligation to maintain records concerning the continuing education hours and includes the requirement that licensees are to keep a current email address on file with the Board at all times.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXISTING RULE AND THE PROPOSED  
AMENDMENTS TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY  
RULE FOR CHAPTER 490-4, CONTINUING COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS,  
RULE 490-4-.02.**

[Note: underlined text is proposed to be added; lined-through text is proposed to be deleted.]

**Rule 490-4-.02. Continuing Competence Requirements**

- (1) The Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy requires each licensed physical therapist and physical therapist assistant to participate in thirty (30) clock hours of experience per licensure period which is not to exceed ten (10) credit hours per calendar day. The purpose of this requirement is to assist in assuring safe and effective practices in the provision of physical therapy services to the citizens of Georgia.
  - (a) The Board recommends the requirements for competence as planned learning experiences which have content beyond the licensee's present level of knowledge and competence which may be subject to audit by the board.
  - (b) Content of the experience must relate to patient care in physical therapy whether the subject is research, treatment, documentation, education, management, or some other content area.
  - (c) In the event that a licensee does not meet the continuing competence requirement, the license will not be renewed.
- (2) Effective July 1, 2018, (30) hours of continuing competence per biennium shall include a minimum of four (4) contact hours specifically in Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence as defined in the Georgia Physical Therapy Act or by passage of the Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence Examination.
  - (a) A Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence course must be obtained from a Georgia college or university with an accredited physical therapy education program or a

provider which holds a current Physical Therapy Association of Georgia (PTAG) Approval Certificate for the course.

- (b) Passage of the Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence Examination is equivalent to the four (4) hour continuing competence requirement for Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence provided that the same test result has not been previously submitted to the Board as part of an application for licensure or to satisfy the requirements of an order of the Board.
- (3) The following programs and activities may be considered for approval, but are not limited to:
- (a) Programs approved by the American Physical Therapy Association and its affiliate components; or
  - (b) Programs approved by the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia or any other state chapters; or
  - (c) Programs approved by the Federation of State ~~b~~B~~B~~oards of Physical Therapy (Procert); or
  - (d) Programs provided at CAPTE-Accredited colleges and universities with programs in physical therapy when the continuing competency course is held under the auspices of the school of physical therapy; or
  - (e) Programs offered by similar professional organizations offering experiences that meet the guidelines set forth in paragraph one.
  - (f) Fifteen (15) hours for undergoing a peer review; or
  - (g) Ten (10) hours for conducting a peer review when that activity is an adjunct responsibility and not the primary employment; or
  - (h) Participation as a presenter for continuing education courses, workshops, seminars or symposia which have been approved by the approved list above; Continuing competence credit is based on contact hours and may not exceed 10 hours per topic;
  - (i) Authorship of a presented scientific poster, scientific platform presentation or published article; Continuing competence credit is 10 hours per even and may not exceed 20 hours;
  - (j) Teaching a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant credit course when that teaching is an adjunct responsibility and not the primary employment; Continuing competence credit is based on contact hours not to exceed 20 hours;



- (k) Certification of clinical specialization by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties. Continuing competence credit is 30 hours and is recognized only in the biennium in which certification or recertification is awarded.
  - (l) Self - instruction from reading professional literature; Continuing competence credit is limited to a maximum of three (3) hours; or
  - (m) Attendance at a scientific poster session, lecture, panel, symposium or university course Continuing competence credit is one hour per contact hour of activity; or
  - (n) Acting as a clinical education instructor for an accredited physical therapist or physical therapist assistant educational program; Continuing competence credit is one (1) hour per eight (8) contact hours with a maximum credit of 10 hours; or
  - (o) Acting as a clinical instructor or an intern for a formal, nonacademic, advanced clinical internship or as a mentor or a learner for a formal, nonacademic mentorship with a maximum credit of 10 hours.
  - (p) Donating time in the role of a Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant, within the scope of practice, to a charity event; Continuing competence credit is one (1) hour per eight (8) contact hours, limited to a maximum of five (5) hours;
  - (q) Reference Policy 13
  - (r) Post professional physical therapist educational programs that award academic credit are counted as one (1) university credit hour equaling ten (10) continuing competence hours. For example, a two (2) credit hour course in which a passing grade is achieved would equal twenty (20) continuing competence hours.
- (4) Unacceptable activities for continuing competence include, but are not limited to:
- (a) Orientation and in-service programs;
  - (b) Meetings for purposes of policy decisions;
  - (c) Non-educational meeting at annual association, chapter or organization meetings;
  - (d) Entertainment or recreational meeting or activities;
  - (e) Committee meetings, holdings of offices, serving as an organization delegate;
  - (f) Visiting exhibits;
  - (g) CPR.
- (5) Continuing competence requirements shall apply within the first biennium that a physical therapist/physical therapist assistant is licensed in Georgia. However, licensees who have graduated during the current renewal biennium and who have passed the National

Physical Therapy Examination are exempt from the continuing competence requirement during the biennium in which they have graduated and successfully passed the exam.

- (6) Beginning the January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2016 biennium and thereafter, persons licensed to practice as a physical therapist or a physical therapy assistant or who shall file an application to practice as such in this state are to maintain a record of completed continuing education courses and experiences by registering with an online recording and reporting system approved by the Board.
  - (a) For the purposes of this requirement, the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy adopts the utilization of CE Broker. ~~attitude offered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).~~
  - (b) Licensees and applicants shall incur no additional costs from ~~the FSBPT~~ CE Broker for this service.
  - (c) Every licensee or applicant subject to the rules of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy shall be deemed to have given such person's consent to the Board and its representatives to access their continuing competence record retained within the online database for the purposes of auditing and verifying completion of the Board's continuing competency requirements. Such person waives all objections to the admissibility of the record in any proceedings or hearings before the board.
- (7) Individuals licensed during the last six (6) months of a biennium renewal period will not be required to meet continuing competence requirements for that biennium.
- (8) Individuals who have been reinstated within the last six (6) months of a biennium renewal period may use the continuing competence coursework used for reinstatement, thereby making them exempt from the requirement for that biennium renewal period.
- (9) Those licensees selected for audit shall submit documentation of compliance upon receipt of notice. Acceptable documentation shall include:
  - (a) An official program or outline of the course attended or taught or a copy of the publication which clearly shows that the objectives and content were related to patient care in physical therapy and shows the number of contact hours, as appropriate. The information also should clearly identify the licensee's responsibility in teaching or authorship; and
  - (b) A certificate or verification of completion of home study which identifies the sponsoring entity or maintain a copy of the final grade report in the case of a University credit course(s), or specialization certificate, or proof of attendance with a copy of the program for the other acceptable activities, or documentation of self-instruction or reading professional literature; or



- (c) Verification of a peer review of practice with verification of acceptable practice by a recognized entity. An example of a recognized entity is the American Physical Therapy Association Board Policy (See APTA Policy G03-05-15-40).

(10) Responsibilities of the Licensee:

- (a) To maintain the original continuing competence documents no less than ~~three (3)~~ five (5) years from ~~the beginning date of the licensure period~~ the date the Continuing Education credit was obtained. These records should be maintained in the licensee's personal files for no less than ~~three (3)~~ five (5) years ~~from the beginning date of the licensure period through the even numbered year after the license is renewed~~.
- (b) To complete all steps necessary to meet the re-licensure requirements on or before December 31st of the odd numbered years.
- (c) To provide the Board with information requested during an audit.
- (d) To keep a current mailing address and email address on file with the Licensing Board Office at all times.

Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24; 43-1-25; 43-33-10(11); and 43-33-16.

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF  
PHYSICAL THERAPY RULES CHAPTERS 490-4,  
CONTINUING COMPETENCY AUDIT, RULE 490-4-.03.**

**Purpose/Main Features:** To repeal the rule in total as the Board is vested with authority to conduct continuing education audits at its discretion. The rule will be stricken in its entirety.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXISTING RULE AND THE PROPOSED  
AMENDMENTS TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY  
RULE FOR CHAPTER 490-4, CONTINUING COMPETENCY AUDIT, RULE 490-4-.03.**

[Note: underlined text is proposed to be added; lined-through text is proposed to be deleted.]

**Rule 490-4-.03. Continuing Competency Audit**

- (1) ~~Each licensee is responsible for completing all steps necessary to meet the renewal application requirements on or before December 31st of the odd-numbered years to include recording proof of completion of the continuing competency (CC) requirements, within the online recording and reporting system approved by the Board, prior to the expiration date of the license.~~
- (2) ~~A renewal applicant may be subject to audit if the applicant:~~
  - (a) ~~is randomly selected for CC audit BEFORE the license expiration date;~~
  - (b) ~~answers "no" to the continuing competency question;~~
  - (c) ~~has been disciplined by any state or regulatory board; and/or,~~
  - (d) ~~has been convicted, or entered a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or been sentenced under the "First Offender Act" for any felony, misdemeanor or any offense other than a minor traffic violation? DWI a DUI are not minor traffic violations.~~
- (3) ~~Licensees whose renewal applications are randomly selected for CC audit must submit records of attendance and proof of completion in accordance with BR 490-4-.02 before the renewal application is considered complete. The license will not be renewed until satisfactory documentation of completion is submitted.~~
- (4) ~~If satisfactory documentation of completion of all CC requirements is not submitted before the end of the established late renewal period, the license will be administratively lapsed for failure to meet the CC requirements to renew the license.~~
- (5) ~~The Board may opt to conduct an audit of CC hours submitted in connection with a license renewal application AFTER a license is renewed.~~
- (6) ~~If an audit of CC hours for renewal shows that the CC hours or documentation was submitted into the online recording system before the end of the late renewal period AND the hours are deficient, incorrect, false, or fraudulent:~~



- (a) ~~The Board may take disciplinary action against a licensee and may require, as a condition of granting renewal, that the licensee enter into an agreement with terms and conditions that include, but are not limited to, the following:~~
- ~~(1) pay a fine of \$500.00 per violation; and,~~
  - ~~(2) submit proof satisfactory to the Board of completion of all deficient CC hours, none of which may be used to satisfy the CC requirement of any subsequent renewal cycle.~~

Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-19(a)(10); 43-1-24; 43-1-25; 43-33-10(4), (11); 43-33-14 and 43-33-18(c)(1) & (3).

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF  
PHYSICAL THERAPY RULES CHAPTERS 490-9,  
DRY NEEDLING, RULE 490-9-.05.**

**Purpose/Main Features:** To delete all references to “aPTitude” and substitute “CE Broker” in its place.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXISTING RULE AND THE PROPOSED  
AMENDMENTS TO THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY  
RULE FOR CHAPTER 490-9, DRY NEEDLING, RULE 490-9-.05.**

[Note: underlined text is proposed to be added; lined-through text is proposed to be deleted.]

**Rule 490-9-.05. Dry Needling**

- (1) Dry needling is a skilled technique performed by a physical therapist using filiform needles to penetrate the skin and underlying tissues to affect change in body structures and functions for the evaluation and management of neuromusculoskeletal conditions, pain, movement impairments, and disability for preventative and therapeutic purposes.
- (2) Dry needling must be performed by a licensed physical therapist who:
  - (a) Has consulted with an individual licensed pursuant to Article 2 or 4 of Chapter 34 of Title 43; and,
  - (b) Is specifically trained and competent by virtue of education and training to perform dry needling. **Online study for dry needling instruction, with the exception of OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Standards, will not be accepted as a demonstration of competence and training.**
- (3) A physical therapist has demonstrated specific and competent education and training when the licensee has submitted the following documentation to the Board:
  - (a) Proof of education in the OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Standard; and,
  - (b) At least one of the following:
    1. Proof of graduation from an entry-level physical therapy program that included dry needling instruction consisting of a minimum of 50 hours total and a competency assessment of achievement in its curriculum; or
    2. Proof of graduation from a post-graduate credentialed residency or fellowship program of study that included dry needling instruction consisting of a minimum of 50 hours total and a competency assessment of achievement in its curriculum; or

3. Proof of documented, successful completion of a didactic dry needling course of study consisting of a minimum of 50 hours total and a competency assessment of achievement in its curriculum.
- (4) Effective July 1, 2018, to perform dry needling in the state of Georgia licensed physical therapists and physical therapists applying for licensure must submit documentation of dry needling education and training into the online recording and reporting system approved by the Board.
  - (a) For the purposes of this requirement, the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy adopts the utilization of ~~aPTitude offered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).CE Broker.~~
  - (b) Licensees and applicants shall incur no additional costs from ~~the FSBPT-CE Broker~~ for this service.
  - (c) Every licensee or applicant subject to the rules of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy shall be deemed to have given such person's consent to the Board and its representatives to access their record retained within the online database for the purposes of auditing and verifying completion of the requirements for dry needling. Such person waives all objections to the admissibility of the record in any proceedings or hearings before the board.
- (5) At the time of license renewal, each licensed physical therapist approved to perform dry needling shall attest that he or she is practicing dry needling in the state of Georgia in accordance to the rules and regulations of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy.
- (6) A violation of the provisions outlined in this Board rule or a false attestation on the renewal application is grounds for disciplinary action as determined by the Board.

Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24; 43-1-25; 43-33-10(11); and 43-33-16.



#### **Rule 490-4-.02. Continuing Competence Requirements**

- (1) The Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy requires each licensed physical therapist and physical therapist assistant to participate in thirty (30) clock hours of experience per licensure period which is not to exceed ten (10) credit hours per calendar day. The purpose of this requirement is to assist in assuring safe and effective practices in the provision of physical therapy services to the citizens of Georgia.
  - (a) The Board recommends the requirements for competence as planned learning experiences which have content beyond the licensee's present level of knowledge and competence which may be subject to audit by the board.
  - (b) Content of the experience must relate to patient care in physical therapy whether the subject is research, treatment, documentation, education, management, or some other content area.
  - (c) In the event that a licensee does not meet the continuing competence requirement, the license will not be renewed.
- (2) Effective July 1, 2018, (30) hours of continuing competence per biennium shall include a minimum of four (4) contact hours specifically in Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence as defined in the Georgia Physical Therapy Act or by passage of the Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence Examination.
  - (a) A Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence course must be obtained from a Georgia college or university with an accredited physical therapy education program or a provider which holds a current Physical Therapy Association of Georgia (PTAG) Approval Certificate for the course.
  - (b) Passage of the Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence Examination is equivalent to the four (4) hour continuing competence requirement for Georgia Ethics and Jurisprudence provided that the same test result has not been previously submitted to the Board as part of an application for licensure or to satisfy the requirements of an order of the Board.
- (3) The following programs and activities may be considered for approval, but are not limited to:
  - (a) Programs approved by the American Physical Therapy Association and its affiliate components; or
  - (b) Programs approved by the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia or any other state chapters; or
  - (c) Programs approved by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (Procert); or
  - (d) Programs provided at CAPTE-Accredited colleges and universities with programs in physical therapy when the continuing competency course is held under the auspices of the school of physical therapy; or
  - (e) Programs offered by similar professional organizations offering experiences that meet the guidelines set forth in paragraph one.
  - (f) Fifteen (15) hours for undergoing a peer review; or
  - (g) Ten (10) hours for conducting a peer review when that activity is an adjunct responsibility and not the primary employment; or
  - (h) Participation as a presenter for continuing education courses, workshops, seminars or symposia which have been approved by the approved list above; Continuing competence credit is based on contact hours and may not exceed 10 hours per topic;

- (i) Authorship of a presented scientific poster, scientific platform presentation or published article; Continuing competence credit is 10 hours per even and may not exceed 20 hours;
  - (j) Teaching a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant credit course when that teaching is an adjunct responsibility and not the primary employment; Continuing competence credit is based on contact hours not to exceed 20 hours;
  - (k) Certification of clinical specialization by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties. Continuing competence credit is 30 hours and is recognized only in the biennium in which certification or recertification is awarded.
  - (l) Self - instruction from reading professional literature; Continuing competence credit is limited to a maximum of three (3) hours; or
  - (m) Attendance at a scientific poster session, lecture, panel, symposium or university course Continuing competence credit is one hour per contact hour of activity; or
  - (n) Acting as a clinical education instructor for an accredited physical therapist or physical therapist assistant educational program; Continuing competence credit is one (1) hour per eight (8) contact hours with a maximum credit of 10 hours; or
  - (o) Acting as a clinical instructor or an intern for a formal, nonacademic, advanced clinical internship or as a mentor or a learner for a formal, nonacademic mentorship with a maximum credit of 10 hours.
  - (p) Donating time in the role of a Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant, within the scope of practice, to a charity event; Continuing competence credit is one (1) hour per eight (8) contact hours, limited to a maximum of five (5) hours;
  - (q) Reference Policy 13
  - (r) Post professional physical therapist educational programs that award academic credit are counted as one (1) university credit hour equaling ten (10) continuing competence hours. For example, a two (2) credit hour course in which a passing grade is achieved would equal twenty (20) continuing competence hours.
- (4) Unacceptable activities for continuing competence include, but are not limited to:
- (a) Orientation and in-service programs;
  - (b) Meetings for purposes of policy decisions;
  - (c) Non-educational meeting at annual association, chapter or organization meetings;
  - (d) Entertainment or recreational meeting or activities;
  - (e) Committee meetings, holdings of offices, serving as an organization delegate;
  - (f) Visiting exhibits;
  - (g) CPR.
- (5) Continuing competence requirements shall apply within the first biennium that a physical therapist/physical therapist assistant is licensed in Georgia. However, licensees who have graduated during the current renewal



biennium and who have passed the National Physical Therapy Examination are exempt from the continuing competence requirement during the biennium in which they have graduated and successfully passed the exam.

- (6) Beginning the January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2016 biennium and thereafter, persons licensed to practice as a physical therapist or a physical therapy assistant or who shall file an application to practice as such in this state are to maintain a record of completed continuing education courses and experiences by registering with an online recording and reporting system approved by the Board.
  - (a) For the purposes of this requirement, the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy adopts the utilization of CE Broker.
  - (b) Licensees and applicants shall incur no additional costs from CE Broker for this service.
  - (c) Every licensee or applicant subject to the rules of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy shall be deemed to have given such person's consent to the Board and its representatives to access their continuing competence record retained within the online database for the purposes of auditing and verifying completion of the Board's continuing competency requirements. Such person waives all objections to the admissibility of the record in any proceedings or hearings before the board.
- (7) Individuals licensed during the last six (6) months of a biennium renewal period will not be required to meet continuing competence requirements for that biennium.
- (8) Individuals who have been reinstated within the last six (6) months of a biennium renewal period may use the continuing competence coursework used for reinstatement, thereby making them exempt from the requirement for that biennium renewal period.
- (9) Those licensees selected for audit shall submit documentation of compliance upon receipt of notice. Acceptable documentation shall include:
  - (a) An official program or outline of the course attended or taught or a copy of the publication which clearly shows that the objectives and content were related to patient care in physical therapy and shows the number of contact hours, as appropriate. The information also should clearly identify the licensee's responsibility in teaching or authorship; and
  - (b) A certificate or verification of completion of home study which identifies the sponsoring entity or maintain a copy of the final grade report in the case of a University credit course(s), or specialization certificate, or proof of attendance with a copy of the program for the other acceptable activities, or documentation of self-instruction or reading professional literature; or
  - (c) Verification of a peer review of practice with verification of acceptable practice by a recognized entity. An example of a recognized entity is the American Physical Therapy Association Board Policy (See APTA Policy G03-05-15-40).
- (10) Responsibilities of the Licensee:
  - (a) To maintain the original continuing competence documents no less than five (5) years from the date the Continuing Education credit was obtained. These records should be maintained in the licensee's personal files for no less than five (5) years.
  - (b) To complete all steps necessary to meet the re-licensure requirements on or before December 31st of the odd numbered years.
  - (c) To provide the Board with information requested during an audit.



**Rule 490-9-.05. Dry Needling**

- (1) Dry needling is a skilled technique performed by a physical therapist using filiform needles to penetrate the skin and underlying tissues to affect change in body structures and functions for the evaluation and management of neuromusculoskeletal conditions, pain, movement impairments, and disability for preventative and therapeutic purposes.
- (2) Dry needling must be performed by a licensed physical therapist who:
  - (a) Has consulted with an individual licensed pursuant to Article 2 or 4 of Chapter 34 of Title 43; and,
  - (b) Is specifically trained and competent by virtue of education and training to perform dry needling. **Online study for dry needling instruction, with the exception of OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Standards, will not be accepted as a demonstration of competence and training.**
- (3) A physical therapist has demonstrated specific and competent education and training when the licensee has submitted the following documentation to the Board:
  - (a) Proof of education in the OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Standard: and,
  - (b) At least one of the following:
    1. Proof of graduation from an entry-level physical therapy program that included dry needling instruction consisting of a minimum of 50 hours total and a competency assessment of achievement in its curriculum; or
    2. Proof of graduation from a post-graduate credentialed residency or fellowship program of study that included dry needling instruction consisting of a minimum of 50 hours total and a competency assessment of achievement in its curriculum; or
    3. Proof of documented, successful completion of a didactic dry needling course of study consisting of a minimum of 50 hours total and a competency assessment of achievement in its curriculum.
- (4) Effective July 1, 2018, to perform dry needling in the state of Georgia licensed physical therapists and physical therapists applying for licensure must submit documentation of dry needling education and training into the online recording and reporting system approved by the Board.
  - (a) For the purposes of this requirement, the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy adopts the utilization of CE Broker.
  - (b) Licensees and applicants shall incur no additional costs from t CE Broker for this service.
  - (c) Every licensee or applicant subject to the rules of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy shall be deemed to have given such person's consent to the Board and its representatives to access their record retained within the online database for the purposes of auditing and verifying completion of the requirements for dry needling. Such person waives all objections to the admissibility of the record in any proceedings or hearings before the board.
- (5) At the time of license renewal, each licensed physical therapist approved to perform dry needling shall attest that he or she is practicing dry needling in the state of Georgia in accordance to the rules and regulations of the Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy.

- (6) A violation of the provisions outlined in this Board rule or a false attestation on the renewal application is grounds for disciplinary action as determined by the Board.

Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24; 43-1-25; 43-33-10(11); and 43-33-16.